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CIA-RDP81-00280R000200180003-4

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## INFORMATION REPORT

PREPARED AND DISSEMINATED BY

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

COUNTRY

Poland

SUBJECT

Significance of Gomulka's Pledge to Hold Free Elections/Possible Re-evaluation of Recent Polish Developments by Soviets in Light of Hungarian Situation.

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1. The significance of Wladyslaw Gomulka's promise to hold early elections in Poland appears to be seriously overestimated in the West. Thanks to Gomulka himself, the chances of maintaining Communist power over Poland are far greater than in Hungary, quite aside from developments in October 1956.
2. Gomulka quite rightly maintained that the policies he advocated for Poland, and by indirection for the other Satellites after World War II, were sounder from the Communist viewpoint than those planned and in most instances carried out by the Soviets in Europe.
3. In one respect, Gomulka's policy was adopted in Poland. After the Polish Communist Party (PPR) and the Polish Socialist Party (PPS) were merged into the United Workers' Party, the Soviets advocated the abolishment of other political parties in Poland. Actually, in most of the Satellites, the non-Communist parties were eliminated after the transition period. In Poland, however, Gomulka's counsel prevailed in this respect at least, and the Polish peasants' Union as well as the Democratic Party remained as legal parties alongside the United Workers' Party. Very skillfully, secret members as well as agents of the UB (Security Service) were systematically maneuvered into controlling positions of the two remaining "Non-Communist" parties. So successful was this operation that Gomulka finds himself today in the ironic position of having a firmer grip on the so-called non-Communist parties than he has on the United Workers' Party, where Communist subservients to Moscow are still in the majority even after the recent moves toward independence.
4. Under these circumstances, Gomulka can await the results of even relatively free elections with equanimity. Should the combined vote of the nominally non-Communist parties exceed the election total of the United Workers' Party, it would have to be assumed that these parties would furnish some of the top leaders of a future Polish regime. For the reasons outlined above, such a group would pose no threat to Communist control in general and might even consolidate Gomulka's strength.
5. [redacted] the situation is quite different in Hungary, where Soviet policy with regard to non-Communist parties had prevailed. In the light of the current Hungarian situation, [redacted] the Soviet leadership has privately reconsidered its attitude toward Gomulka and may at this point be sincerely grateful to him for his outward show of independence. This, in addition to the fact that the avoidance of blood-shed in Poland by timely concessions has minimized the demand for withdrawal of Soviet forces from Poland. It is well conceivable that Gomulka in a very real sense has preserved Communism as the dominating force in Poland. Whether he himself will ultimately prevail within the Communist movement is by no means assured, although his short-range prospects appear good.

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